Dr. PATRICK's

Two Sermons

AGAINST

MURMURING and CENSURING.

IMPRIMATUR.

Z. ISHAM,

April 23. 1689.

R. P. D. HENRICO *Epis. Lond. à Sacris.*

TWO SERMONS;

One against

MURMURING,

The other against

CENSURING,

Preached at St. *Paul's Covent-Garden.*

BY

S. PATRICK, D. D. Rector there.

LONDON,
Printed for **Richard Chiswell**, at the Rose and Crown in St. *Paul's* Church-yard,
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1 Cor. X. 10.

Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

AMong the many Demonstrations we have of the infinite Goodness to us, this is the greatest; That he hath been pleased, out of the excess of his kindness, to leave no way untried, to omit no means that hath any force in it, to reduce us unto the Obedience we owe His Majesty, and thereby bring us to everlasting Happiness. For this end, he sent his own dear Son among us; who dying for us, and rising again, sent the Holy Ghost, by whom the Apostles were instructed and impowred to call us back to God, both by Injunctions, and Exhortations, and Beseechings; by promises of Eternal Life, if we hearken to them; and threatning of Eternal Death, if we refuse to obey them.

And because some Minds are so dull, at least at certain seasons, that they are little moved with the Hope and Fear of Rewards and Punishments so far off, as the other World; therefore, together with those future things, they represent the present advantages or mischiefs which attend upon our good or bad behaviour towards God in this World, who invites us to obedience by

by the memorable Examples of those who were faithful to him, and followed him fully; whom he therefore extraordinarily blessed, and multiplied his Mercies on them, as Persons highly in his favour: And on the other side deters us from rebellious Works, by the fearful Examples of those, who being an untoward, faithless, and stubborn Generation, were therefore so remarkably punished, with one severe Judgment after another, till they were utterly consumed.

Of this last sort, the old *Israelites* were the most famous instance; who having received singular Favours from God, by whom they were brought out of *Egypt*, carried through the Red Sea under the protection of a glorious Cloud, baptized there into *Moses*, and all eat the same spiritual Meat, and drank the same spiritual Drink; yet proved the most ungrateful of all Men living, and not only forgat his Benefits, but turned them into wantonness and rebellion against him: For which cause, *he was not well pleased with many of them; for they were overthrown in the wilderness*; into which he had brought them by a mighty Hand and outstretched Arm, in order to their settlement in the Land of *Canaan*.

All this you read in the *first* five first Verses of this Chapter; from whence the Apostle proceeds to warn all Christians, by their disastrous fall, to take good heed to themselves; and not to fansie the case was now altered under the Discipline of Christ. No such matter: *These things*, saith he, *v. 6. were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; neither be idolaters, as were some of them, v. 7. not commit fornication, v. 8. nor tempt Christ, v. 9. neither murmur,*

as

as ſome of them alſo murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer. For all theſe things happened unto them for enſamples (or *Types* of what ſhall befal us) *and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, v. 11, 12. As much as to ſay, If ye *do* as they did, expect to *ſuffer* as they did: Do not preſume upon the Grace and Favour of Chriſt, nor imagine you are ſo ſetled in it, that, *do* what you can, you ſhall not fall from it; for he will not bear you out in evil courſes, but proceed againſt you, according to theſe former Precedents of the Divine Vengeance upon an ungrateful People.

Now the Ingratitude of the Old *Iſraelites* appeared in nothing more, than in their *Murmuring*; which the Apoſtle here mentions in the laſt place, as the very upſhot of all their Provocations: And I have choſe to treat of it at this time, becauſe this ſin, which in it ſelf is moſt unworthy, and in its effects very dangerous, is, I fear, too common, and yet very ſlightly paſſed over, without a particular Repentance for it, in this Age wherein we live.

In handling of which, I ſhall, *firſt*, ſhew what it is to *murmur*; *ſecondly*, whence it proceeds; *thirdly*, what reaſon we have to obey this holy Precept, and not give way to a murmuring humour.

Firſt, For the *firſt* of theſe, every body, I believe, by *murmuring*, underſtands that diſſatisfaction of Mind, which makes us repine at, and find fault with our preſent Condition.

But if we ſearch into the propriety of the *Greek* word, we ſhall find that it ſignifies ſomething more, than meerly an inward repining and diſſatisfaction of the Mind; denoting withal, the outward Expreſſions of that diſcontented Humour in undutiful words: That's the import of γογγύζειν, which in our Language, we may tranſlate, to *grumble* and *mutter*, by ſpeaking againſt ſuch things or perſons as we diſlike, without a juſt Reaſon for it, or upon ſlight cauſes; eſpecially when we ought rather to be very thankful.

And here in my Text it hath a peculiar ſignification, for ſpeaking diſreſpectfully of their Governours and Guides, out of a diſlike of their Conduct; which, in the iſſue, burſt out into reproachful Language againſt them: For this was the Sin here taxed by the Apoſtle, in the old *Iſraelites*; who murmur'd againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, becauſe they fanſied they had brought them out of *Egypt*, to periſh in the Wilderneſs. This they began to do ſo early after their deliverance, that they were no ſooner come out of the Red Sea, and had ſung their Song of Praiſe to God for it, but immediately (as you read in the very ſame Chapter, *Exod.* XV. 25.) when they had travelled but three days, *The people murmured againſt Moſes, ſaying, What ſhall we drink?* And again, Chap. XVI. 2,3. *The whole congregation murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron, and ſaid, Would to God we had died by the hand of God in Egypt, when we ſat by the fleſh-pots, and did eat bread to the full. For ye have brought us into this wilderneſs, to kill this whole aſſembly with hunger.* With theſe two *firſt* Murmurings, the patient Goodneſs of God was pleaſed to bear, expecting they would be cured of this diſtemper, by the care he took

to

to provide both Drink and Meat for them in the Wilderneſs: But when his Gentleneſs would do no good upon them; and they were ſo far from laying to heart his tender Mercies, and remembring what he had done for them, that they fell into new and more deſperate fits of this Diſeaſe; then his Diſpleaſure aroſe againſt them, and moved him to begin to deſtroy them: With lighter ſtrokes indeed, at the firſt breaking out of his Anger; ſos *when the people complained*, in *Numb.* XI. 1. he only ſent a fire which conſumed thoſe who were *in the skirts of the camp.* But when they would take no warning by this, he proceeds to heavier; for you read in *Numb.* XIV. 2, 3. their murmurings grew ſo high, that they had the face to ſay, not only *Would God we had died in Egypt*, or *in this wilderneſs*; but, *Let us make us a Captain, and let us return to Egypt.* A moſt unaccountable fit of diſcontent; which ſo infatuated them, as to make them think of their late ſlavery, without any trouble; nay, ſpeak of throwing themſelves voluntarily into the hands of their cruel Tormentors. Now this was ſo provoking, that God ſent a Plague to cut off thoſe that were the cauſe of that murmuring, *v.* 37. unto which the Margins of your Bibles direct you, as an explication of my Text; *the Deſtroyer* here ſpoken of, being the Angel whoſe Miniſtry God uſed to deſtroy them with a Peſtilence, as it is explained in the Caſe of *David*, 2 *Sam.* XXIV. 16. And they that eſcaped this Plague, were only reprieved for a time, but not acquitted; for they had this heavy Sentence paſſed upon them all, That not one of *the evil congregation, which murmured againſt God*, ſhould enter into the good Land, to which he intended to conduct

them, but wander in the Wilderneſs, till they were utterly conſumed, *v.* 27, 35.

And yet this did not cure them of their Wicked Diſpoſition; but you read of a far more grievous Murmuring after this, which broke out into an open Mutiny. Read *Numb.* XVI. where you will find a great Party of the moſt eminent Perſons, gathered together againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, ſaying, *Ye take too much upon you, ſeeing all the Congregation are Holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them*; that is, they pretended *Moſes* and *Aaron* ſtretched their Authority too far, and aſſumed a Power which did not belong to them; or not more to them than any other; there being no Man in the Congregation, but had as good a title to it, as themſelves: And therefore they boldly demanded, *Wherefore do ye lift up your ſelves above the congregation of the Lord*? As if they had ſaid, By what right do you govern us, who are your Equals?

This ſo incenſed the Divine Diſpleaſure, that you read there of a more terrible *Deſtruction* than the former: For Lightning burnt up thoſe who affronted *Aaron*; and the Earth opened her Mouth, and ſwallowed up thoſe who diſputed the Authority of *Moſes*. Which were ſuch frightful examples, that they make us tremble now at the thoughts of them: And yet ſo hardned was that evil Generation in this diſcontented humour, the very next Morning, *All the congregation of Iſrael murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron, ſaying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord*, v. 41. whereupon they had *all been conſumed*, without any further reprieve, *as in a moment*, if *Moſes* and *Aaron* whom they

ſo

ſo groſly abuſed, had not interceded with God, and made an atonement for them.

Now as they thus murmured, becauſe of the Difficulties they met withal, when they firſt came out of *Egypt*; ſo there were ſuch kind of Men, it ſeems, in the beginning of our Religion, who being made partakers of the Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus, were ſo inſenſible of God's great Grace to them, that when they ſaw the ſtraits into which the profeſſion of Chriſtianity brought them, and other things were not ſuitable to their Expectations, they murmured againſt the *Apoſtles* themſelves, and againſt other Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, as if they had undone them: Or, at leaſt, they were very diſcontented and impatient under the troubles which befel them, for Religion's ſake; and diſtruſted the conduct of the Apoſtles; and were apt to betake themſelves unto the guidance of other Perſons, *Who promiſed them liberty, when they themſelves were the ſervants of corruption*, 2 Pet. II. 19.

For, notwithſtanding ſuch warnings as this of St. *Paul* in my Text, we find by St. *Jude* there were ſome Chriſtians, chiefly of the *Jewiſh* Nation, who were *Murmurers, Complainers, walking after their own Luſts*, v. 10. that is, were of the ſame diſpoſition with their Fore-fathers in the Wilderneſs (*Numb.* XI. 4, 5, &c.) complaining bitterly that they were in a diſtreſſed condition (as the Church was generally at that time) and had not that reſt, eaſe, liberty and proſperity which they long'd for, and perhaps expected to enjoy. And it is very probable (which is *Grotius*'s conjecture) that they complained of the preſent Government, and

and were deſirous to throw it off: For we read, *v.* 8. *They deſpiſed dominion, and ſpake evil of dignities: Going in the way of Cain and Core,* v. 12. though there was ſo little reaſon they ſhould be diſcontented upon this account, that of all the former Monarchies to which the *Jews* had been ſubject, whether *Babylonian*, *Perſian*, or *Grecian*, none had treated them with ſuch gentleneſs and Lenity, as the preſent did; which was that of the *Romans*.

But a murmuring humor is utterly inſenſible of any thing, but only preſent Griefs or Wants: Having no remembrance of former evils either ſuffered or feared; nor being at all obſervant of preſent Bleſſings, though never ſo many, and though never ſo big with future Hopes and Expectations. This is viſible in the whole Hiſtory of that People; with whom the Divine Goodneſs was *grieved forty years long in the Wilderneſs*.

From which we may alſo learn, that though this be the propriety of the Word *Murmuring* in this place; yet it hath alſo a larger ſignification (as we underſtand from ſeveral other paſſages of the Holy Scriptures) and doth not denote only diſcontent with the preſent Government; but with a Man's own private condition, when it is not ſuitable to his deſires.

For the Hiſtory of the old *Iſraelites* informs us, that their Murmurings were as much at the ſtate of their private Affairs, as at the publick management. This was their common fault in the Wilderneſs, that they complained upon every occaſion, if they had not ſuch plentiful Proviſion; nay, ſuch variety of it, as might gratifie their fancy, as well as ſatisfie their neceſſity:

neceſſity: Or, if they fell into any difficulty in their travels unto that good Land, to which God promiſed, if they would have patience, in due time to conduct them.

And as we find them complaining upon this account; ſo we find (if we look into the reſt of the Scriptures) other Perſons complaining upon divers other ſcores.

1. Some becauſe they were not regarded according to the deſerts they fanſied in themſelves. As we read in the Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, *Matth.* XX. 11. that ſome murmured at the good Man of the Family, becauſe they who came early into his Service, and *had born the burden and heat of the day*, received no more wages than thoſe who came later, and had taken leſs pains in his buſineſs; which they thought to be unequal.

2. Others we find murmuring, becauſe they ſeemed to be neglected, while great care was taken of their Neighbours: So we read in *Act.* VI. 1. *That there aroſe a murmuring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe their Widows were neglected in the daily miniſtration.*

3. Others murmured at ſuch Doctrines as they did not reliſh, finding fault with them, as the manner is, before they underſtood them. Joh. VI. 60, 61. *Many of his diſciples, when they heard that, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it? And when Jeſus knew that they murmured at it, he ſaid, Doth this offend you?* that is, Turn you away from me? As much as to ſay, there is no cauſe for it; the fault is in your ſelves, and not in me or my Doctrine.

4. Another

4. Another ſort murmur becauſe all do not conſent to their little Opinions, and comply with their Cuſtoms: As the Phariſees did at the Diſciples of Chriſt, becauſe they *tranſgreſſed the tradition of the Elders*, and did not waſh their hands before they ſat down to eat, *Mat.*XXV. 2. And becauſe they pluck'd the Ears of Corn, and rubb'd them in their hands, on the Sabbath-day, *Luke* VI. 1. All which I paſs over, with the bare mention of them, becauſe that's ſufficient for my purpoſe: Which is to ſhew, that any thing we diſlike, becauſe it is not according to our Fancy, Opinion, Humour, Inclination, or Intereſt, may be the matter of murmuring and complaint: Whereby we reflect very reproachfully upon God and his Providence; and ſometimes upon thoſe who are God's Miniſters, or upon our innocent Brethren, who may have good warrant for that which we condemn.

And now from what hath been ſaid, it will be eaſie to ſhow from whence this *murmuring* humour proceeds; which is the *ſecond* thing I propounded, and may ſoon be diſpatch'd.

Secondly. 1. For it is evident it proceeds from falſe Opinions, and wrong Notions of things, which muſt be examined and corrected, or elſe there will be no cure for it. Hence it was that the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* murmured, becauſe our Saviour and his Diſciples, did freely *eat with publicans and ſinners*, *Luke* V.30. not conſidering that the *whole needed not a phyſician, but the ſick:* And that he came *not to call the righteous, but the ſinners to repentance.* The other *Jews* had done the ſame upon other occaſions before-mentioned; but very unreaſonably and unjuſtly, as they might have underſtood;

ſtood; if inſtead of murmuring, they would have pondered his Inſtructions. *They murmured at him* (ſaith St. *John*, VI. 41.) *becauſe he ſaid, I am the bread which came down from heaven.* But why did they not rather complain, (as *Muſculus* gloſſes upon thoſe words) that they could not underſtand things of ſuch weight and neceſſity? Why did they not pray to be enlightned from above, and deſire him to inſtruct them more clearly in theſe matters? This had become Men of ſenſe. But in this we ſee the *Genius* not only of *Judaical*, but of all carnal Minds; who ſooner murmur againſt the Truth they do not underſtand, than accuſe the groſſneſs of their own Hearts, and pray to God for the Gift of right Underſtanding, and of Faith. If they had underſtood in what ſenſe he ſaid he came down from Heaven, they would not have murmured; and therefore they ought to have deſired to be inſtructed in the ſenſe of his words, and not have murmured at that which they did not underſtand. But thus it fares, as I ſaid, with the Doctrine of Chriſt, that *it ſooner finds thoſe that diſlike it, and condemn it, before they know it, than hearts that deſire rightly to underſtand it, and to embrace it when it is underſtood.* Thus he.

2. It ariſes alſo from impatience of any Troubles or Inconveniences which commonly attend our Condition here in this World, or which ariſe from our preſent Circumſtances; as we ſee in the Hiſtory of the *Hebrew* Nation before-mentioned; whoſe caſe this was upon ſeveral occaſions.

3. From Pride and Ambition, Envy and Malignity of Spirit; as in the caſe of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; who imagined themſelves to be altogether as deſerving

as *Moſes* and *Aaron*; and to have as much right as they to that Authority, which they pretended thoſe great Miniſters of God had uſurped over the People.

4. Sometimes from Luxury and Wantonneſs; as when the *Iſraelites* murmured, becauſe they had not ſuch dainty Food as they looked for, though they were otherwiſe plentifully and miraculouſly fed, with *Manna* from Heaven, which they were cloyed withal, and loathed, *Numb.* XI.

5. Sometimes, or rather always, from unthankfulneſs for the great Mercies we enjoy; which are, in all Conditions, ſo many, that they might well ſilence all unmannerly Complaints, did we but take the pains to lay thoſe Bleſſings to heart: Eſpecially, if we compared them with the bad Condition wherein we have ſometimes been; or deſerve to be, if we be not more grateful than to complain in a better. This was alſo the caſe of the whole *Hebrew* Nation in the Wilderneſs; who forgat the Works of God, and remembred not the Wonders he had done for them, nor the Evils from which he had delivered them; and ſo fell into fits of diſcontent, upon every occaſion. And it is the caſe of all other Men who are guilty of this ſin at this day: For, as *Oecumenius* notes upon thoſe words of the Apoſtle [*Do all things without murmurings and diſputing*, Phil. II. 14.] *He that murmurs, is unthankful unto God; and he that is unthankful, ſpeaks hardly of him.*

Ὁ γὰρ γογγύζων, ἀχάριστός ἐστι· Ὁ δὲ ἀχάριστος δυσφημεῖ.

6. Sometimes from vile Covetouſneſs, though covered under ſpecious pretences; as when *Judas* the Traitor murmured at the waſte of the precious Ointment poured on our Saviour; which he would have had ſold, that the Money might have come into his pocket.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, From want of a lively faith in God, and in his good Providence; which was the ſin of the old *Iſraelites* alſo; *who murmured, ſaying, Can God furniſh a table in the wilderneſs? Behold he clave the rock, that the waters guſhed out. Can he give bread alſo? Can he provide fleſh for his people?* Pſal. LXXVIII. 19, 20. The former inſtances of his Power, did not breed ſuch a Confidence in him, as they ſhould have wrought in their Hearts; but they ſtill diſtruſted him, whom they could not but acknowledge had done things as wonderful for them, as thoſe which they further deſired.

And thus *Origen* obſerves (upon *Exod.* XVI.) it is common among Men to murmur, if the Weather be not ſeaſonable, if the Years be not ſo fruitful as they were wont to be; nay, if every thing do not fall out according to their Wiſhes and Expectations: That is, we would have no trials of our Faith and Patience, and ſubmiſſion to God; but a conſtant ſtream of proſperous ſucceſſes, juſt according to our own Contrivances or Hearts Deſires.

Which is a very dangerous diſtemper of Mind, which muſt be cured by removing theſe Cauſes, from whence it proceeds. There is not the like danger, it muſt be acknowledged, in every one of them; but none of them are ſafe, and therefore we ought to ſeek after a ſpeedy remedy. It makes a conſiderable difference in this caſe, *who* it is that murmurs, againſt *whom*, and for *what cauſe*: If he be a Subject who hath received great Benefits; if it be againſt him to whom he owes much, and therefore ought to love and praiſe; if it be for a trifling or a tolerable cauſe, much more if Thanks ought rather to be rendred, than Complaints made; it is a moſt

deteſtable ſort of murmuring, as the good Man before-named (*Muſculus*) hath obſerved. It is alſo much to be conſidered, from whence this Vice ariſes; whether from meer impatience of ſome Loſs or Inconvenience, or from Pride, Contempt, Indignation, and Envy: For though it be vicious in it ſelf to murmur againſt a Superiour; yet it is a leſs fault, if it ariſe from ſome damage a Man hath received, of which he is impatient, than it would be, if it proceed from Pride, Contempt, and a Spirit of Envy; ſuch as was in *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and in the falſe Apoſtles and their Sectaries among the *Corinthians*, who murmured and ſpake againſt St. *Paul*. The firſt Chriſtians had ſome among them, as you have heard, who murmured becauſe their Widows were neglected, in the Proviſion which was daily made for the Poor; but it was neither out of Pride, nor Contempt, nor Envy, but from meer Impatience of the grievance it was to them, to ſee thoſe, for whom they had a ſpecial concern, not ſo much minded as others, who had no more need than they that were neglected. Every Eye can diſcern the difference between theſe murmurings, which are not all of equal guilt; yet none of them free from blame, nor without danger, if we do not apply our ſelves, with all diligence, to the proper means of curing our Minds of this diſtemper.

Unto which, that I may awaken you, I ſhall now proceed to conſider the reaſon we have to obey this Apoſtolical Precept, and no longer give way to a diſcontented humour; which is the *third* thing I undertook in the beginning, and may help to remove the Cauſes of this Diſeaſe, if we well weigh the Miſchiefs it doth.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. 1. And here let it be conſidered, that this is a moſt *uncomfortable condition*, and puts the Soul into ſuch diſorders, that if it did no other hurt, it ought on this account to be avoided: For who is there that allows himſelf in this humour of diſcontented murmuring, either at the publick ſtate of things, or his own private condition, that truly enjoys any part of thoſe Bleſſings, which are fallen to his ſhare in this World? His Spirit is ſo ſowred by it, that he can reliſh nothing, though in it ſelf never ſo pleaſant; he is poor and miſerable in the midſt of abundance; wanting not only that which he hath not, but even that which he hath: He takes no ſatisfaction in any thing, though God's bounty hath beſtowed, perhaps, variety of Bleſſings upon him; for this humour will let him take no notice of them, but only of that which is grievous to him: By this means he poſſeſſes nothing, no, not himſelf; his Soul being carried away in a hurry, by things without him, he knows not whither: He is ſeldom at home; and when he is, he finds nothing there but diſorders, tumults, and diſquiets of Mind; ſuch a confuſion of Thoughts as hurries him away again from himſelf; and that, many times, into dangerous adventures. Who would indulge then ſuch a temper of Mind, as ſpoils all our Comforts, even that Satisfaction, which we ſhould find in our own ſerious thoughts?

2. But it is not meerly an *uncomfortable condition*; it is alſo very *ſinful*: For it proceeds as you have heard from ſeveral other ſins; and it is the cauſe alſo of many more; both of ſins of omiſſion, and ſins of commiſſion, as we commonly diſtinguiſh them.

1. Firſt

1. Firſt of innumerable ſins of *Omiſſion*, in not recounting the multitude of God's Mercies beſtowed upon us; in not pondering the greatneſs of them, and our own unworthineſs to enjoy them; in not giving perpetual thanks for them; neither calling to Mind all the Evils from which we have been preſerved or delivered; nor ſo much as taking notice of all the Bleſſings we daily receive, which call for our moſt grateful acknowledgments: For they who are given to murmuring, ſeldom reflect (as we find by the *Iſraelites*) upon the Obligations they have to God, though never ſo great, never ſo wonderful; they forget how he hath ſaved them from the dreadful dangers which they feared, or delivered them from the heavy burdens which oppreſſed them; and mind only what they at preſent deſire, or diſlike.

Which wrought the *Iſraelites* into ſuch a very bad temper of Mind, that they were never pleaſed. No better pleaſed out of *Egypt*, than when they were in it; for they murmured as much, or more, after their Deliverance, as they did before; and I do not find they were better ſatisfied in *Canaan*, than they had been either in *Egypt*, or in the *Wilderneſs*; for they carried their ungrateful Mind along with them thither: And Men can be pleaſed no where, in no condition, unleſs they have a due Senſe of God and of his Goodneſs; and be truly affected with his benefits.

2. As for the Sins of *Commiſſion* they are no leſs numerous, ſuch as envious diſtractions, evil ſurmiſings, raſh cenſurings, lying, defamations, and ſometimes Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, Extortion, if not downright Robberies; which are the common Effects of Mens

diſcontented

diſcontented repining at their own private condition. And when they are diſcontented with the publick State of Affairs, thence proceed evil ſpeakings, clamor, revilings, variance, ſtrife, contention, quarreling; and many times higher degrees of all theſe Sins, ſuch as *ſpeaking evil of dignities*, &c. For by diſcontent Men exaſperate their own Spirits; and by Complaints and Murmurings they exaſperate Others, unto unruly Paſſions, which increaſe into undutiful Practices, which break out at laſt into publick Diſturbances. And how many miſchiefs Men are wont to draw upon themſelves by that means, I ſhall not now ſay; becauſe my preſent buſineſs is, to ſhew only the ſinfulneſs of a Murmuring Spirit.

But the next particular will make you ſenſible of that alſo; when I have added to this theſe *two* Conſiderations.

1. *Firſt*, That a murmuring humour puts us into a temper of Mind, directly contrary to the Chriſtian Spirit, which conſiſts in ſuch an happy frame of Mind, as makes us rejoice in God always; and adminiſter all the Joy and Comfort we are able one to another. *For the kingdom of God* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *is Righteouſneſs, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, Rom. XIV. 17. Where by *Joy* is not meant only the joy we feel in our own Hearts, from a ſence of God's love to us; but that which we give to one another, by our friendly agreement: So St. *Chryſoſtom*, and from him, *Oecumenius* interprets the Words, *A Vertuous Life, Peace with our Brethren, and the Joy which ſprings from concord*, are the things will bring us to Heaven; and *he that ſubverts this Peace and Joy, doth his Brother a greater injury*,

injury, than if he had robb'd him of his Money; for it is a thing far more precious than Gold and Silver, being one of the *Fruits of the Spirit*, next to love (*Gal.* V. 22.) from whence it ſprings as from its ſource: For if we love our Brethren we ſhall be loth to grieve them; and ſhall ſtudy to pleaſe them; which is ſuch an excellent diſpoſition of Mind, that *Plato* himſelf, reports this as an ancient Saying, that *he ſhould be reputed the wiſeſt Man, and the moſt Victorious, whoſe buſineſs it is to make others rejoice and be merry.*

L. 2. De Legibus.

Now murmuring is ſo oppoſite to this, that it damps all the Joy we ſhould otherwiſe take in God and in his Love; and puts us into ſuch a ſullen humour, that it ſpoils alſo Chriſtian Society, and that ſweet fellowſhip we ought to have, by giving ſuch Counſel and Comfort one to another, as may make us *rejoice always*, whatſoever happens; and never repine at any thing, though never ſo croſs to our expectations: Which we ſhould the rather ſtudy, becauſe *Joy* makes us more ſerviceable to the World, than otherwiſe we ſhall be; both by putting us forward to do good, and by commending Piety and Goodneſs unto others. Whence it is that we read, Act. IX. 31. *The churches were multiplyed*, when they *walked in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Let us take heed then how we any way (particularly by Murmuring and Complaints) baniſh this Heavenly Gueſt from our ſelves or others; which is *the Page*, as St. *Baſil* calls it (or whoſoever was the Author of the *Monaſtical Conſtitutions*) *that waits upon Goodneſs and Vertue*; eſpecially now, when there is ſuch cauſe for it, by God's wonderful Goodneſs to us

Ὁ παιδὸς ἀρετῆς καὶ ἀγαθότητος εὑρετής.

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in this Kingdom, let us not upon any account refuſe to take our ſhare in it; but (to ſpeak in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Phraſe, *Pſal.* CVI. 5.) *let us rejoice in the gladneſs of our nation.*

2. For if we do not, but give way to a murmuring humour, it will ſpoil all the good we do, and make it unacceptable to God our Saviour. Which is a reaſon, more eſpecially, why we ſhould not murmur at any part of our Chriſtian Duty; no, not at taking up the Croſs, nor any thing elſe, which may ſeem a *hard ſaying*; which is the worſt ſort of murmuring that we can be guilty of: For it is the quality of baſe, diſ-ingenuous and ſtupid ſlaves (as St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves upon *Phil.* II. 14.) and therefore ought not to be found in a Child, 'Who is about his Fathers buſineſs, 'and labours for himſelf. Conſider, ſays his Father, 'that what thou doſt for me, thou doſt for thy ſelf; 'thou wilt have the benefit of it; wherefore then doſt 'thou grumble? It is for them to murmur, who la-'bour and toil when others reap the advantage; but 'he that labours for himſelf, what cauſe hath he to 'murmur? He had better not work at all, than not 'without murmuring. He loſes his labour; he ſpoils that 'which he hath done, though it be well done. Do 'you not ſee how in our own Family, we are wont 'to ſay continually, I had rather you would let it a-'lone, than do it with Murmuring: Nay, we oft-'times chuſe rather to want ones ſervice, than bear 'with his murmuring humour: For it is a grievous 'thing, very grievous, to murmur. It is nigh unto 'blaſphemy; which is the reaſon God puniſhed it ſo 'ſeverely in the *Iſraelites*; for it was a peice of ingra-

'titude: He that murmurs is unthankful to God, 'and he that is unthankful is a Blaſphemer. Thus 'he.

And indeed it is directly contrary to that Love and Charity, which is the Note of the Children of God; and *believes all things, hopes all things*, takes all in good part, and makes the beſt conſtruction of them: As on the contrary, where ſelf-love, Pride, and ſuch like Vices reign, there is nothing but impatience, ſuſpicions, ſiniſter interpretations, murmurings and complaints, whereby even things good in themſelves are corrupted and defiled. This we learn from that famous inſtance of Chriſtian Charity, *viz. entertaining Strangers*, in which it was not ſo much conſidered whom they entertained, as with what Mind. If they did it with an ill will, and repiningly, it was ſo far from being look'd upon as a benefit, that it was taken for a reproach: Whence that admonition of St. *Peter*, 1 *Ep.* IV. 9. *Uſe hoſpitality one to another without grudging*, or *murmuring*; (for it is the ſame Word which we ſo tranſlate in other places.) They were not to think much at it, as we ſpeak; much leſs to grumble at the trouble or the charge their Brethren brought upon them; but receive them as cheerfully as Men now welcome their Gueſts to the publick Inns, where they pay for what they have: And thus, as St. *Paul* inſtructs us in the place before named, we ought to perform our whole Chriſtian duty (*do all things without murmuring*) and likewiſe entertain, in the ſame manner, whatſoever falls out in the World, by the direction or permiſſion of God's Wiſe Providence; for he is not pleaſed to ſee us follow him, or do as

as he bids us, with a heavy Heart, and a diſcontented, complaining Spirit.

And ſo I come to the *Third* and laſt Reaſon, why we ſhould obey the Apoſtolical admonition in my Text, and work out this part of our Salvation, even *with fear and trembling*: Which is this,

3. That murmuring is the cauſe of ſuch Sins, as are the puniſhment of thoſe who are guilty of it. *Their own tongue*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *falls upon themſelves*; they uttering in their anger ſuch diſcontented ſpeeches, that God takes them at their Word, as we ſpeak, and brings upon them the Evils they unadviſedly wiſhed: For anger, you may obſerve, is the ordinary Companion of diſcontented murmuring; which reflects ſo highly upon God, that it moves his juſt diſpleaſure. We may ſay in this Caſe as *Solomon* doth, *Prov.* XIX. 3. *The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth* (or as the *Chaldee* hath it, *murmureth*) *againſt the Lord*. Men run inconſiderately into many Sins, and then lay the blame upon their natural weakneſs, and want of power to avoid them; which is in effect to lay the fault upon God: And in the ſame manner they draw many inconveniencies upon themſelves, and fall into great ſtraits; whereupon they fret and fume (though not directly, yet by conſequence) againſt God: For when they ſay, Things might have been better ordered; what neceſſity was there for this? They forget that nothing comes to paſs without God's Providence (no not thoſe things which are ill done) towards which we ought to behave our ſelves with a becoming reverence; and take heed leaſt we ſpeak *unadviſedly with our lips*.

The danger of which is ſo apparent in the example of the murmuring *Iſraelites*, of whom my Text ſpeaks, that we need ſeek no other proof of it: For you read how, in a raging fit of Diſcontent, they were ſo diſtracted, that they minded neither what they did, nor what they ſaid; for they entred into a conſultation, as you have heard, to make them a *Captain*, and return again into the *Egyptian* Slavery, out of which they had been lately redeemed; as if that were more deſireable, than the preſent Liberty they enjoyed of ſerving God as he had appointed in the Wilderneſs; which they were not permitted to do, while they ſtay'd in *Egypt*. And among other angry things, which they ſaid in that diſcontented fit, this fooliſh Word dropt out of their mouth, *Would God we had died in this wilderneſs*, Numb. XIV. 2. Accordingly it came to paſs; they had their wiſh: God being ſo provoked with their murmuring, that he pronounced this heavy Judgment upon them for it, That none of them ſhould ſee the good Land he deſigned for them, but periſh in the Wilderneſs; where they wandered about for *forty years*, till all their Carkaſſes were conſumed.

This is a ſufficient caution againſt this Sin; which is then moſt dangerouſly provoking, when it continues long: Which is the only thing I ſhall further obſerve upon this Argument.

The *Iſraelites*, I told you in the beginning, had been guilty of murmuring before the time unto which the Apoſtle hath reſpect in my Text: But God moſt graciouſly forbare to proceed againſt them, and did not ſend *the Deſtroyer* to cut them off. Before they came out of *Egypt*, you may read in *Exod.* V. 21. how reproachfully they

they treated *Moſes* and *Aaron*; as they did after their deliverance, *Exod.* XIV. 13. XV. 24. & XVI. 2. In the laſt of which places, you may obſerve a great many aggravations of their Sin: Read the Words again, to make them the more evident: *And the whole congregation of the children of Iſrael murmured againſt Moſes and Aaron in the wilderneſs, and ſaid unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we ſat by the fleſh-pots*, and *when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderneſs, to kill this whole aſſembly with hunger.*

1. Behold here, how very groſs their Ingratitude was, which extenuated the Benefits they had received, as inconſiderable; and, looking only upon a preſent ſtrait which was ſoon over, made them quite forget their long Servitude in the Houſe of Bondage, out of which they had been newly delivered.

2. Nay, behold how they magnifie *Egypt*, where they were no better than vile Slaves; and preferr carnal Things, before divine Bleſſings; the *fleſh-pots of Egypt*, before the liberty of their Religion, and the glorious Preſence of God, which appeared among them, and went along with them.

3. More than this, they ſpeak of the very Plagues of *Egypt* (by which they wiſh they had died) with more ſatisfaction, than of the Mercies they enjoyed under the Almighty's Protection.

4. And it is obſervable how extravagantly they commend their Condition in *Egypt*, as if they had wanted nothing there, but had had their *fill* of all good things; and deſpiſe their preſent happineſs, of being the *people of the Lord*, whom he had *redeemed and purchaſed*, Exod. XV. 13, 16.

5. They

5. They unjuſtly alſo and ungratefully accuſe *Moſes* and *Aaron* for bringing them forth out of *Egypt*, into that Wilderneſs; when they did nothing of their own head, but by the direction of God, who went before them, and led them the way wherein they ſhould go.

6. To conclude this, they miſcall their glorious deliverance from the Houſe of Bondage, into a ſtate of freedom, by the odious Name of Death and Deſtruction.

So frantick doth a diſcontented Humour make thoſe who are poſſeſſed with it: Notwithſtanding which, God, as I ſaid, was ſo long-ſuffering towards them, that he did not at that time viſit their Iniquity upon them, but bare with them till he ſaw them ſo ſetled and fixed in this evil temper of Mind, that they would not be reformed by his patient Goodneſs; Then he took a ſevere Vengeance on them, and by degrees utterly deſtroyed them.

Let us admire this Long-ſuffering and Forbearance of God, and thankfully acknowledge his Goodneſs, which, as *Iſaiah* ſpeaks, *multiplies to pardon*, and hath not yet entred into Judgment with us: But let us take heed how we provoke him to anger, by continuing in this or any other Sin; eſpecially after much patience with us, which ought to lead us to a ſpeedy Repentance.

God may be pleaſed graciouſly to paſs by the firſt Irruptions of thoſe Paſſions which make us murmur; nay, not be ſo ſtrict in marking what is done amiſs, as not to pardon many fits of diſcontent, which may come upon us. He knows our frame, and pities our weakneſs;

neſs; and is ſlow to anger, and far from being forward to puniſh our frowardneſs. But if we indulge our ſelves in this humour, and do not labour to correct it; if we ſet not our ſelves againſt it, but let it grow to ſuch an heighth, that we forget to be thankful to God for his Mercies, never reflect upon all the Good he hath done us, nor the Evils from which he hath freed us, either by his own hand immediately, or by the miniſtry of others; but, quite contrary, we complain in a ſtate of Happineſs, being diſpleaſed that every thing is not to our guſt; and diſordering our ſelves with angry diſcontent, becauſe all things are not ordered according to our Mind; and perhaps ſpeaking againſt thoſe, whom God hath imployed to do us good (which was the caſe of the old *Iſraelites* in their murmurings againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*:) Then it is high time, we may fear, for God to chaſtize us, both for our Ingratitude, and for our abuſe of his long-ſuffering Goodneſs to us.

We have all the reaſon in the World to believe, That if we walk in the ſame way the *Iſraelites* did, it will lead us into the ſame deſtruction; as the Apoſtle here teaches us, in this Diſcourſe to the *Corinthians*. If we ſlight, or do not value the Mercies God hath beſtowed upon us; or undutifully reflect upon thoſe who have been inſtrumental in procuring them to us; if we ſo diſlike our preſent Settlement, that we thirſt after a Change, we do not know what puniſhments we are drawing upon our ſelves. And let us be aſſured, we ſhall be no more ſatisfied in that Change, ſhould it come to paſs, (which God forbid) than we are in the preſent Eſtabliſhment. The motions of our diſcontented Minds cannot be quieted by any thing without them. We ſhall ever

ever find matter for Complaint, and far greater in a new Revolution, than we can do in this.

We have not forgotten, ſure, the Condition wherein we lately were; how all our Laws were violated; what endeavours were uſed to ſubvert our Religion and our Government; ſo that *mens hearts* (to ſpeak in our Saviour's Words, *Luke* XXI. 26.) *failed them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which were coming upon us*: Which we ſhall unavoidably draw upon our ſelves, (and if it be poſſible greater Evils,) ſhould we be ſo unhappy as to ſee our preſent Settlement overturned.

Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, not only to your Actions, and to your Tongues, but to your very Minds and Spirits: Do not allow of any riſings and boilings there, but inſtantly ſuppreſs them. Give not way to the very beginnings of any diſcontented thoughts and angry Motions: Stay them before they proceed further, and grow unruly: Ask them what they would have? whither they would go? what they deſign, and where they will end? For you know not whither they will carry you, if you do not put an end to them as ſoon as they begin.

They will lead you from one ſin to another, till they have drawn one miſchief upon you, after another; and where they will conclude at laſt, we cannot certainly tell; but we may make a ſhrewd gueſs, by the Example of thoſe, whom the Apoſtle here ſets before us, to be a warning to us; by which if we judge, it will be, in utter deſtruction. For all that evil Generation, who would not ceaſe their murmuring, notwithſtanding all the chidings they had for it, and the ſharp puniſhments that had been inflicted on them for their Amendment,

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fell at laſt in the Wilderneſs, ſhort of the promiſed Land, into which God reſolved they ſhould not enter, becauſe of their perverſeneſs.

And what was the cauſe of all this? What made them ſo perverſly murmur, but only ſuch things as theſe?

They forgat the late Oppreſſions under which they had groaned, and the glorious Deliverance God had wrought for them from that miſerable bondage.

They conſidered not their preſent eaſe, and the liberty they had to ſerve God according to their Hearts deſires.

They had no reſpect to the Hope which was ſet before them, of being brought to perfect reſt in the Land of Promiſe; and there ſetled in the Happineſs, which God himſelf expreſſes in theſe magnificent Words: *If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye ſhall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy Nation,* Exod. XIX. 5, 6.

Herein then lies the Cure of this Diſeaſe, if we find any ſpice of it in our ſelves.

1. Let us reflect daily upon the Condition wherein we were a few Months ago, and the extraordinary hand of God in delivering us from our fears.

2. And then lay to heart the freedom we now enjoy, to ſerve God without fear of thoſe Dangers, wherewith we were ſurrounded.

3. Together with the hope we have (if we our ſelves do not hinder) to ſee both our Civil and Re-

ligious Rights and Liberties ſecured to us and to our Poſterity, ſo as they have not been ſince we were a Nation.

And then we ſhall be ſo far from murmuring, that we ſhall think we owe the higheſt Praiſes and Thankſgivings to him.

Which if we be careful to pay, and every day upon our bended knees, bleſs his *holy* Name, *who hath ſaved our life from deſtruction, and crowned us with loving kindneſs, and tender mercies*; we ſhall never be guilty of murmuring any more, which is utterly inconſiſtent with thankfulneſs to God for all his Benefits.

Of which if we be mindful, who knows but we may fall, by degrees, into ſuch an angry mood as that of the *Iſraelites*; who commended their *Egyptian* Bondage, and miſcalled their Slavery there, by the Name of, Liberty to enjoy a fulneſs of good Things; nay, look'd upon their Deliverance from thence, as a betraying them to periſh in the Wilderneſs; inſomuch, that at laſt they wiſh'd themſelves in *Egypt* again, and conferred about going back into their Chains: This was ſuch a fearful Provocation, that we ſhould dread any approaches to it; not admitting ſo much as a diſcontented Thought, if we can prevent it; but if it preſs in upon us, reject it, or throw it out as ſoon as it is entred: For if it lie brooding there, we know not what it may bring forth. If it be no more than Complaints, where we have reaſon rather to give Thanks, it is a great deal too much, and muſt be ſpeedily amended: For there is no great difference between appro-

approving that which is evil, and diſliking that which is good: Nay, * *to find fault with that which is well done, is equally culpable, as to commend that which is bad: The ſame thing to free that which is baſe and unworthy, from juſt reprehenſion; and to quarrel with thoſe things which are ſo far from deſerving our Cenſure, that they ought to be highly praiſed.*

* Cyril. Alex. ἐν ἴσῃ γὰρ τάξει τῷ συνεπεῖν τῇ φαυλότητι, τὸ κατηγορεῖν τοῦ καλοῦ, &c. in Johan. VII. 12.

A

SERMON

AGAINST

CENSURING,

PREACHED

At St. *Paul's Covent-Garden*, on the Third SUNDAY in ADVENT, *March* 17. 168$\frac{8}{9}$.

By *S. Patrick*, D. D.

LONDON,
Printed for Richard Chiswell.
MDCLXXXIX.

A

SERMON

AGAINST

CENSURING.

PREACHED

At St. Paul's Covent-Garden, on the Third Sunday in Advent, March 17. 1685.

By S. Patrick, D. D.

LONDON,
Printed for Richard Chiswell.
MDCLXXXIII.

1 Cor. IV. 10.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come——

IN theſe words there is a *double Suppoſition*; and thereupon a *weighty Inference.*

The Suppoſitions are; *Firſt*, That there will be another *Advent*, or coming of our Lord, beſides that which we now commemorate; when he appeared in *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.*

Secondly, That the end and intention of his Second coming, is to *judge us*; as the foregoing Words tell us, *He that judgeth me is the Lord*; therefore let none of you be ſo bold as to *judge before the time, until the Lord come*; whoſe proper buſineſs it is to judge others.

That's the *Inference* he makes from thoſe *two* known Doctrines: Since the Lord will come again, on purpoſe to Judge us all, let not us take upon us to prejudge one another, but ſuſpend our cenſures, till he come to Judgment.

The Suppoſitions are ſo well underſtood, and I hope ſo ſtedfaſtly believed, that I need not go about to prove them. They are among the *firſt principles* or Elements *of the Doctrine of Chriſt*; and it is a ſhame to be continually laying again, *the foundation* (as it is called *Heb.* VI. 2.) *of the reſurrection of the dead, and the eternal judgment*; the belief of which we own,

by

by profeſſing the Chriſtian Religion; which in oppoſition to the *Jewiſh* Pedagogy, is thus deſcribed in the ſame Epiſtle, *Heb.* XII. 22, 23. *We are not come to mount Sinai*, (ſuch a diſpenſation, that is, as that of *Moſes*, whoſe Law was given upon that Mount) *but we are come to mount Sion, to the city of the living God, and to God the judge of all*: As much as to ſay, When we are made Members of the Chriſtian Church (figured by Mount *Sion* and *Jeruſalem*) we acknowledge God to be the Judge; Firſt, of *all things*; not only the outward Actions, which the *Moſaical* Law chiefly regulated; but even the Thoughts and Counſels of the Heart: And, Secondly, of *all Perſons*; not only *Jews*, but the whole *Gentile World*, of whatſoever rank or condition they be: Who ſhall be called to an account for all things whatſoever, open or ſecret, known or concealed; and accordingly receive their doom from the Almighty and Righteous Judge of the World.

Let me only therefore remember you, that it is neceſſary to keep theſe great confeſſed Truths, continually in Mind; and carry this ſenſe about with us every where, That there will be a day, when the Lord Jeſus who came in *the form of a Servant*, to viſit us in great Humility, to give us his Laws, and to die for our Sins, will come again in Glorious Majeſty; not as a *Servant*, but as a *Soveraign*, attended with all the Hoſt of Heaven, to call us before him, and examine how his Laws have been obſerved by us, and what fruit there hath been of his ſhedding his precious Blood for us.

This if we thought of daily, with a lively belief, that as he is a moſt impartial Juge; ſo the greateſt

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ſecrets cannot be concealed from his knowledge: It would move us to obſerve all his Laws, with the greateſt care and diligence; becauſe he will certainly and unavoidably ſentence thoſe to the heavieſt puniſhments, who contemn his Authority, by the violation of any of them, particularly this in my Text, which the Apoſtle infers from thoſe Principles; not to judge any thing before the time, but to leave all to the Judgment of the Lord.

For the underſtanding of which, it will be neceſſary to do theſe three things.

Firſt, to ſhow what it is to *Judge*.

Secondly: how the Apoſtle is to be underſtood, when he ſaith *judge nothing*.

Thirdly, What the *Reaſons* and Grounds are, upon which this precept ſtands, in the right ſence and meaning of it.

I.

For the *firſt* of theſe, *to judge*, ſometimes ſignifies no more, than to make ſuch a difference in our thoughts, between one thing and another, when they are preſented to our underſtandings; as our reaſon ſhows us there is in the things themſelves. To diſcern, for inſtance, between truth and falſhood; ſo as to approve the one, and to reject the other: In which ſence we ought *to judge every thing*; and to admit nothing, till we ſee good reaſon to entertain it; for it is a Chriſtian Vertue, to make a diſcrimination between good and bad, true and falſe; and as we find things upon examination, ſo to determine whether they are to be received or rejected.

And therefore the Apoſtle's meaning cannot be to forbid us *to judge* in this ſence of the Word; for he himſelf ſaith in this very Epiſtle, *Chap.* X. 15. *I ſpeak as to wiſe men, judge ye what I ſay*, i. e. I deſire not to be believed, if I ſpeak not reaſon, which you underſtand; and therefore I leave it to your ſelves to determine, upon ſerious conſideration, whether I ſpeak not the Truth. And again *Chap.* XI. 13. *Judge in your ſelves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?* i. e. I need ſay no more; for you can reſolve what is fit in this matter, if you pleaſe to conſult with your own ſober thoughts.

We muſt find then another ſence of the Word *Judge*, which is this;

2. To paſs ſentence upon other Men's actions or qualities, pronouncing them either good or bad. And thus the Apoſtle uſes the Word in the two Verſes immediately preceding my Text, *v.* 3. *But with me it is a ſmall matter, that I ſhould be judged of you, or of mans judgment*; that is, I make no great account, what opinion you or any Body elſe hath of my Fidelity, in the Stewardſhip committed to me (mentioned *v.* 2.) of diſpenſing the Myſteries of the Goſpel of Chriſt; for whether you judge well or ill of me, you may be miſtaken; and therefore I am not much concerned about it; *Yea, I judge not my own ſelf*; that is, I do not abſolutely depend upon my own opinion of my fidelity, though I cannot but know my ſelf better than any one elſe can do; becauſe I may overlook many things, which the Lord ſees, and ſo think better of my ſelf than I deſerve. And therefore (as it follows *v.* 4.) *though I know nothing by my ſelf, yet I am not thereby juſtified*;

juſtified; for he that judgeth me is the Lord: It is not as others judge of us, or as we judge of our ſelves; but as the Lord, who cannot be deceived, ſhall judge. In all which diſcourſe *judging* is paſſing a Sentence, either for, or againſt another Perſon; either to acquit and clear him, or to cenſure and condemn him. And thus it is frequently uſed in other places; particularly, for paſſing a ſentence of Condemnation upon others, accuſing them as guilty, and cenſuring them to be worthy of puniſhment: For Example, *Rom.* XIV. 3. *Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*: That is, condemn him of prophaneneſs, or contempt of God's Laws, in taking his liberty of eating any thing, without diſtinction of Meats; and v. 4. *Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant*? That is, condemneſt him, over whom thou haſt no juriſdiction.

And thus it is to be underſtood in my Text, for Cenſuring and Condemning others; which is an Office that belongs not to us, who ſeldom have a ſufficient cognizance of their caſe.

Which may be done either *inwardly*, in our own thoughts; or *outwardly* alſo in our Words and Speeches, whereby we pronounce the ſentence which our Mind hath paſſed upon them: Between which two (*inward* and *outward* cenſures of others) there is no ſmall difference; and therefore this is a diſtinction, which ought to be carefully obſerved; becauſe it may be lawful to paſs a judgment upon Men's actions in our own thoughts, when we ought not to ſignifie it to others by our Words. For *firſt*, the Perſons upon whom we paſs a judgment, may be ſo much Superiour to us in

Dignity and Authority; or they may excel in ſo many eminent Vertues, and do ſo much good to the World, that it may not be fit for us to ſpeak of every thing we ſee amiſs in them, which we may truly judge in our Minds to be faults: Or, *Secondly*, the Company to whom we ſpeak may be ſuch, as will not make a good uſe of our judgment, but a bad; which is a juſt cauſe, why we ſhould forbear to declare our judgment, whatſoever we may juſtly think in our own breaſts: Or, *Thirdly*, The thing it ſelf, which we cannot but condemn, may be of ſuch a Nature, and done ſo ſecretly, that it will be a breach of Charity to ſpeak of it unto any, but him that is guilty of it.

Now the Word *judge* being thus explained, I proceed to the *Second* thing.

II.

How the Apoſtle is to be underſtood, when he ſaith *judge nothing:* For it may ſeem an impoſſible precept, ſeeing there are many things which ought to be condemned, and many Perſons who are apparently guilty of them. We muſt therefore underſtand him, with ſome limitations, that we may make a wiſe judgment concerning judging other Men; and not let all things they do paſs without cenſure, becauſe we are bound, in ſome caſes, not to cenſure them at all.

And for our clearer information, I ſhall ſhew; *Firſt*, what judgment is not here forbidden; *Secondly*, what is.

Firſt, With reſpect to the former of theſe, I ſhall only put you in Mind of theſe three things.

1. That

1. That *publick Judgments* and judicial Cenſures, are not here condemned; for they have the Divine Authority to warrant them, and Humane Societies cannot ſubſiſt without them: Therefore let none imagine there is any thing in theſe Words, either forbidding a Chriſtian to be a Magiſtrate, or forbidding a Magiſtrate to judge and condemn evil things, and evil-doers. For as Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance for the good of Mankind; ſo it is the Duty of every Magiſtrate, to condemn and puniſh ſuch as do evil; being *ſent*, or commiſſioned *by God for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well*, 1 Pet. II. 14. They do ill then that cenſure and condemn this Office, or thoſe that execute it; for it is that which all Men do in their own Families; where having Authority as *Parents*, or *Maſters*, they correct what is done amiſs.

2. And as there is nothing in theſe Words forbidding Magiſtrates to exerciſe their Office, ſo they contain no prohibition unto *private Perſons*, either to form an Opinion concerning others in their Mind, upon the ſerious obſervation of the courſe of their Actions; or to reprove and rebuke each other for their ſin, according to the Rules of Truth and Charity: For it is neceſſary to form a Judgment concerning others in our Minds, that we may avoid the Company of evil Men, and preſerve our ſelves from the danger of their Contagion: And Charity being the ſum of all our Duty to our Neighbour, prudent and ſeaſonable reproof is often the greateſt Charity we can beſtow upon them. *Let the righteous ſmite me* (ſaith *David*) *and it ſhall be a kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be*

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an excellent oil, which ſhall not break my head, Pſal. CXLI. 5.

3. And as we may thus judge Men to be worthy of reproof, and take upon us to tell them of their Faults, ſo there is nothing in theſe Words forbidding us to *ſpeak of them unto others* in their abſence, eſpecially when they are not amended by private reproof; provided, *firſt*, that we ſincerely deſign the good of thoſe to whom we declare our mind concerning them; and, *ſecondly*, that we ſay no more than is neceſſary to forewarn their Neighbours, leſt they be miſled and infected by them: We muſt not blacken them more than needs, much leſs make them worſe than they are; but only give ſuch a juſt Character of them, as may ſerve for a Caution to thoſe, who otherwiſe may be in danger to be enveigled by them into their evil Courſes. Thus our Lord bids his Diſciples *beware of the Scribes*, who look'd demurely, and behav'd themſelves gravely, and made a ſhew of great Piety in their long Prayers, that they might be the leſs ſuſpected of bad Deſigns, and the more ſecurely deceive ſuch as truſted to their Honeſty, *Luke* XX. 46, 47. And thus St. *Paul* bids the *Epheſians*, Ch. V. 11. *have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them*; that is, detect them, and declare againſt them.

II. Theſe things therefore being *not* forbidden in theſe Words, let us now conſider what Judgment or Cenſure *is* forbidden.

1. And this is certain, That we ought not to judge ſuch things to be ſin, nor cenſure and condemn others upon the account of ſuch things, as the Law of God doth not condemn: For to cenſure thoſe things as unlaw-

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ful, which the Law of God hath not forbidden, is in truth to judge and condemn the Law it ſelf, as an imperfect and defective Rule of our Actions: Which is the Cenſure St. *James* paſſes upon this practice, in thoſe known words of his, *James* IV. 11. *He that ſpeaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law.* Which cannot be meant of any other evil-ſpeaking and judging, but this: When a Man cenſures and condemns his Brother, where the Law doth not cenſure and condemn what he doth. Whoſoever thus judges his Brother, doth really and truly argue the Law of Chriſt, to be wanting in ſomething, which ought to have been preſcribed by it. Inſtead of conforming himſelf to it, he takes upon him to be a Corrector of it, and to make ſupplements to it; as if it were an inſufficient Direction to us, without his Additions. Which is the meaning of the next Words? *But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.* Let ſuch Men conſider that *there is but one Law-giver* (as it follows, *v.* 12.) *who is able to ſave or deſtroy. Who art thou that judgeſt another*, for ſuch things, that is, as the Law of Chriſt doth not condemn? Who gave thee Authority to pronounce, firſt, peremtory Sentences upon thy Brethren, when thou art not appointed by God to be either a Lawgiver, or a Judge of others; eſpecially of ſuch as do not break any Law of Chriſt?

2. As we ought not to judge, that is, condemn Men for ſuch things as the Law doth not condemn; ſo in matters of Diſpute and Controverſie, where the Law is doubtful, or not clear to many good Men, we ought to forbear judging thoſe who are not of our Mind, or

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act not as we do, if otherwiſe they do well. This was a famous Caſe in the Apoſtles days, when there aroſe a Queſtion, Whether the Law of *Moſes* ſhould be obſerved by the Diſciples of Chriſt? The Apoſtles ſaid, No; becauſe our Lord had aboliſh'd it, and left Men at liberty to eat, for inſtance, any Meat whatſoever, if they were but thankful and temperate. But the Jewiſh Chriſtians generally maintained it was ſtill in force; and therefore judged all thoſe to be impious, who did not obſerve his Rites and Ceremonies: This was a high Charge, for which St. *Paul* in many places reproves them, as going about ignorantly to aboliſh the Law of *Chriſt*, whilſt they endeavoured to eſtabliſh that of *Moſes*: Particularly in *Rom.* XIV. 3. he tells them, it became ſuch as were *weak in the faith*, to be ſo humble as not to *judge* thoſe who made no difference of Meats, which Chriſt, they ſtedfaſtly believed, had made common. Though their ignorance made them ſcrupulous, it ought not to have made them cenſorious; eſpecially in ſuch a caſe, where Men followed *Chriſt* rather than *Moſes*. Which ſome think is the meaning of St. *James* (whoſe Epiſtle is written to the Jewiſh Chriſtians) in the place before-nam'd, *Ch.* IV. 11, 12. *He that judgeth his brother* (about ſuch matters as I now mentioned) *judgeth the law*, i.e. the Goſpel of Chriſt, call'd in that Epiſtle, *The Royal Law*, the *Law of Liberty*, and *the perfect Law of Liberty*, Ch. II. 8, 12. I. 25.) which abſolv'd them from ſuch Obligations. And *if thou judgeſt the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge*; that is, takeſt upon thee the Office of Chriſt, to enact thoſe things again into a Law, which he hath aboliſhed. What a preſumption is this! when *there is but one Law-giver, who is able to ſave and deſtroy*,

ſtroy, who art thou that judgeſt another? That is, whatſoever you may fanſie, there is but one to whoſe Laws we ought to be ſubject; and that is not *Moſes*, but *Chriſt*, to whom alone belongs the Power of Life and Death. You may take this Authority upon you, if you pleaſe, of paſſing Sentences of Condemnation upon your Brethren; but they are of no force: It being out of any Man's power to do thoſe any hurt, whoſe innocent liberty he condemns; or to do thoſe any good, who comply never ſo far with his ſcrupuloſity. And what the Apoſtles ſay in this caſe, may be applied to all other wherein good Men differ; and both ſides think with a great deal of reaſon. They that have moſt reaſon, muſt not yield to the temptation they have, to *contemn* the others needleſs ſcrupuloſity; and they that have leaſt, muſt not *condemn* thoſe as they are too prone, who take the liberty which they dare not uſe. If both ſides think, as they do commonly, that they have equal reaſon; then there is no more reaſon for the one to judge the other, than for the other to judge him: But they ought mutually to abſtain from all Cenſures of each others Principles or Actions.

3. As we ought not to condemn one another in matters doubtful; ſo much leſs ought we to paſs our Judgment upon Things that are quite out of the compaſs of our Knowledge. The Secrets of Mens Hearts do not fall within our cognizance, but only as they diſcover themſelves by outward Acts; which ſometimes may not be good, and yet not proceed from ſuch ill Intentions, as we may be apt to imagine. In this therefore we ought to be very ſcrupulous how we judge others to be Men of evil Deſigns, whoſe ill Actions will admit of

a more favourable Interpretation. But when Men do good things, it is the highest presumption to judge they are not done with a good Mind. This is to pretend to know the Hearts of Men, into which none can see, but God alone. And therefore we must not condemn Men of Hypocrisie, when their Actions do not declare it; but referr that to the cognizance of our Lord, who, as it follows after my Text, *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness*: That is, discover the inward Intentions and Purposes of Mens Souls, and all the close Wickedness which was contrived there: And *then every man shall have praise of God.* That is, if he did well, with a good Mind, sincerely and heartily, he shall receive commendation; but otherwise disgrace, and shame, and confusion of face, for being so wicked, as to imagine our Lord could see only the outside of things, and be deceived by fair appearances.

4. In things which fall within the compass of our knowledge, we must take care not to judge either *falsly* or *rashly*, or *hypocritically*. Under these *three*, are comprehended most of the common Censures which Men are wont to pass upon others.

1. And then we judge *falsly*, when we charge another person, with that of which we know he is not guilty; which is so great a sin, that it can scarce be committed without the help of other sins, which throw Men into it; such as secret hatred, envy, wrath, revenge for former Injuries or Offences. But whencesoever it proceeds, it is an high piece of injustice; which, as we ought at all times carefully to avoid, so then especially when we undertake to be Judges.

2. *Rash*

2. *Raſh judgment*, is when we charge others with ſuch things as we know to be but rumours and ſuſpicions; or which we have only ſome ſlight reaſon to believe. This forward haſte to be paſſing our judgment upon Men, though we be well informed, is to be corrected; eſpecially when we declare it upon all occaſions, or perhaps without any occaſion: But to do this before we be well informed, or have duly conſidered, is very vicious; and is one of the bad diſpoſitions of Mind, which lead us to judge the Actions of Others, to proceed from worſe Principles and Ends than really they do.

Thus Men are ſometimes raſhly accuſed of *Covetouſneſs*, upon the account of ſuch actions as were the effect of *Caution*, not to beſtow their Charity amiſs. Others are charged with *Pride*, and *neglect* of Company; with whom their *diſcretion* taught them not to be too familiar. *Ambition*, and Courting the favour of Great Men, is laid to the charge of thoſe, who thought of nothing but only to pleaſe God; in doing that, which proves alſo pleaſing unto them. And on the contrary *croſſneſs* and *perverſeneſs* is charged on thoſe, who cannot comply with others, for fear of offending God. Nothing is more common than to call that *wilfulneſs*, which perhaps is only *weakneſs*; and to condemn that as *wickedneſs*, which was no more than *ignorance*, or *imprudence*. And thus whole Sects and parties condemn one another in the lump, before they know their circumſtances, particularly what advantages they have had or wanted of right information.

In ſuch things, which are not very evident, we ought to ſuſpend our judgment; or rather err on the

other ſide, by judging well of others, which is the Vertue we call *Candor*, which argues much *Wiſdom*, and no leſs *Charity*; at leaſt, a great deal of *good Nature*.

3. The laſt thing of this kind, which I called *Hypocritical Judgment*, is when Men charge others truly and juſtly, with ſuch bad things, as they have really committed; but neither out of diſlike to the Sins which they condemn, nor with any deſign to do good, either to the guilty Perſons, or any other; but meerly to gratifie their own Spleen, or Arrogance, or ſuch like bad affections; to which our Saviour ſeems to have had ſome reſpect, when he ſaid, *Matth.* VII. 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged*; for it follows immediately, *Why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own Eye?* And he calls this, in effect, an Hypocritical judgment, when he adds, *Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brother's eye.* If it be Hypocriſie, to find out ſmaller faults in others, ſooner than greater in ones ſelf; it is much more ſo, to diſcover any fault whatſoever, meerly to pleaſe ſome bad Affections, which delight in ſpeaking Evil of others.

Theſe are dangerous kinds of judging, which the Apoſtle here requires us to forbear, falſe, raſh, or hypocritical condemning of others. The *firſt* of them is *ſlander*; the *ſecond* is *uncharitable cenſure*; the *third* is *ill deſigning ſelf-love*, envy, pride, or ſome ſuch vice, which we harbour in our breaſts.

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And ſo I proceed to the *third* Thing I propounded, The Reaſons and Grounds, why we ought not to judge in this manner.

III. There is one reaſon in my Text; and there is another ſo nearly allyed to it, that they are frequently joined in other places.

That in my Text is, The reſpect we ought to have to *our Lord*; whoſe Office it is to judge.

That which is nearly linked with this, is, The reſpect we ought to have unto *our Brethren*; over whom we have no Authority, and therefore ought not to take upon us to be their Judges.

The *firſt* of theſe if it be weighed, will make our judging others appear to be an inſolence towards our Saviour. The *ſecond* will repreſent it, as an inſolence towards Men.

1. Firſt, I ſay, it is an inſolence toward God our Saviour; an uſurpation upon his Right; a bold intruſion into his Office; an arrogating to our ſelves, that which truly and properly is his ſole Prerogative; eſpecially when Men proceed ſo far, as to dare to judge the very Hearts of others; or to cenſure and condemn them for that which God's Law doth not condemn.

For the judging of the Heart is a thing which God and our Lord aſſume as peculiar to themſelves. *I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins; even to give every man according to his ways*, Jer. XVII. 10. *I am he*, ſaith our Saviour, *which ſearcheth the reins and the heart; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*, Rev. II 23. Upon which account it is a

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moſt bold preſumption, a dangerous arrogance in us, to paſs a ſentence upon the ſecret purpoſes and deſigns of Men, of which we know nothing; but they are reſerved to the peculiar cognizance of him, who alone ſearches their Hearts.

And ſo it is alſo, in the other caſe; when we preſume to cenſure that, which the Law of God it ſelf doth not condemn, either in general or in particular, *He that doth this*, as you heard out of St. *James*, *ſpeaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law*; and he that judgeth the very Law, caſteth off the relation of a *Subject*, and ſets up for a *Soveraign*; inſtead of being a *doer of the Law*, he takes upon him to be a *Judge*; that is, he puts himſelf into the place of God, who as he is the only Maker of Laws, ſo is the only Judge of thoſe, who are to be governed by them. He therefore that Cenſures and Condemns, where this Lawgiver doth not Condemn, forgets himſelf; and is ſo liſted up in his own opinion, that he uſurps the Divine Authority. Whereas, poor Wretch, he can neither *ſave nor deſtroy* (as it there follows) but meerly ſhow his own folly and arrogance, to the great offence of Almighty God, and the indangering his own Soul: *For God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *v.* 6. of the ſame Chapter) *reſiſteth the Proud*; he reſiſts him as an Enemy to his Majeſty; as one that invades his Soveraign Right; and intrudes into his ſole Office of judging others.

II. And though it be leſs conſiderable, yet this is not to be neglected, that he who judges the Hearts of Men; or Cenſures and Condemns that in them, which the Law of God no way Cenſures, commits an inſolence upon his Brethren, over whom he hath no

ſuch

ſuch Authority. He arrogates a juriſdiction over them, which he hath no right to exerciſe; and is guilty of a breach of all the duties we owe to our Neighbour, of *Juſtice*, of *Charity*, and of *Humility*. *Who art thou*, ſays St. *Paul*, *that judgeſt another Man's Servant? to his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth*, Rom. XIV. 4. That is, whom doſt thou take thy ſelf to be, that thou preſumeſt thus to cenſure and condemn him, who is none of thy Servant, but the Servant of the common Lord of us all? By what right doſt thou meddle with another's Servant, who hath his own Maſter, the very ſame that thou haſt; by whoſe judgment, and not by thine, he muſt either *ſtand or fall*? That is, either be pronounced innocent or guilty.

If his Maſter have not forbidden this, which thou condemneſt in him, it is preſumption in thee to cenſure him; it is an injury both to the Maſter and to his Servant; an uſurpation of an Authority over him, unto which we can have no pretence; and therefore cannot be anſwered, either to God, or to our Neighbour; who are both wronged by ſuch judging.

The ſame may be ſaid of all other ſorts of judging before-mentioned; by which we give great offence both to God and unto Man; towards whom if we have any regard, we ſhall hearken to the diſcourſe of St. *Paul*, v. 10. &c. of the ſame Chapter (where he puts both theſe reaſons together) *But why doſt thou judge thy Brother? Or, why doſt thou ſet at nought thy Brother? For we ſhall all ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. For it is written, as I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. So then every one of us ſhall give account of himſelf*

himſelf to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more.

We ought, that is, to examine our ſelves ſtrictly, particularly about the falſe, the raſh, the cauſeleſs Judgments we have paſſed upon others; for which we ought to call our ſelves unto an account, and judge our ſelves ſeverely; and paſſing an upright Sentence upon our Actions, after we have laid them to the Rule of Chriſt's Laws, repent ſincerely of what we have done amiſs: (For that's the uſe the Apoſtle makes of this Doctrine in another place, *Acts* XVII. 31. *Now God commands all men every where to repent, becauſe he hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteouſneſs*, &c.) But as for other Men, we muſt not be ſo forward as we are to paſs our Cenſures upon them; but in many caſes leave them to our Lord, who only can paſs a certain Judgment upon their Actions; he ſeeing their ſecret Intentions, what was the ſpring of them, and the end at which they aimed: All which he will come again to examine, in the ſeaſon proper for it, and make an exacter ſearch than we can do, and be more impartial in his Judgment, than we are apt to be; and likewiſe *render to every man according to his work*; which is not in our power, though we were never ſo well inclined to it.

Theſe things are ſufficient, if duly pondered, to ſhow the reaſonableneſs of the Apoſtle's injunction, *To judge nothing before the time:* And therefore I need not enter into the conſideration, either of the *Cauſes* from which this cenſorious humour flows, which are, Arrogance, Envy, Hatred, Ignorance, Self-intereſt, and ſuch-like: Or of the very miſchievous *Effects* of it, both upon

on the Cenſurer himſelf, and upon thoſe who are loaded with his Cenſures: Whoſe Spirits are hereby irritated, from whence proceed ſharp Contentions and dangerous Diſorders; and whoſe Names are hereby blaſted, their Reputation and Eſteem in the World diminiſhed; by which means they are rendred leſs capable to do the Service they otherwiſe might have performed, either in Church or State: For it gives a Man a great advantage, in whatſoever place he be, to be well thought of in it, and to have a fair Character: Which whoſoever Spoils by his unjuſt or uncharitable Cenſures, is injurious not only to him, but to the reſt of Mankind, who might have been benefited by his Labours. This ſingle conſideration, ſhould make all thoſe that have any ſenſe of God, to be more ſparing of their Cenſures, than Men generally are, that they are a great hindrance to Men's doing good in the World; for which we were all born, and is the thing at which we ſhould all aim, in the ſeveral Places where God hath diſpoſed us.

But I have not time to ſet this Vice forth in all theſe colours; and therefore what remains ſhall be ſpent in giving a few *Advices* for the Cure of this cenſuring Humour; and ſome *Directions* how to behave our ſelves, when we are unjuſtly cenſured by others.

I.

The *Advices* for the Cure of this Diſtemper in thoſe that are prone to it, are *three:* The *firſt* hath reſpect to *God*; the *ſecond* hath reſpect to our *ſelves*; and the *third* to our *Neighbours*.

I. *Firſt*, If we thought more of this ſingle Principle of Chriſtian Religion, that *God will one day judge us*, we ſhould be leſs prone to judge others; For this very

thing will be examined and judged at that day, whether we have judged others falſly, unjuſtly, raſhly, or hypocritically; and nothing can more directly move God to judge and condemn us, than ſuch Judgment and Condemnation as we have ſinfully paſſed upon other Men. *My brethren, be not many maſters*, ſaith St. *James*; (that is, be not forward to judge and condemn one another) *knowing that we ſhall receive the greater condemnation*, Jam. III. 1. Of which our bleſſed Lord himſelf puts us in mind, *Mat.* VII. 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged*: Where *Grotius* his note is, *I certainly reſolve, that the Judgment of God is here meant.* For it is the cuſtom of our Saviour, to transferr things ſpoken of Humane Affairs, unto Divine and Spiritual Concernments. And if ſo, then the ſence of his words is this: *Judge not your brethren, leſt God judge you.* But *if a man be overtaken with a fault*, as St. *Paul's* Advice is, *reſtore ſuch a one with a ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted*, Gal. VI. 1. Let it be your work to ſtrengthen the Weak, direct the Ignorant, and reſtore the Lapſed with tender Admonitions, and gentle Reproofs; but put no ſcorn, paſs no ſevere Cenſures upon them; for this God takes ill, as well as they. This is not to ſtudy to help your Brethren, but to inſult over them: It is to exaſperate, not to reform them. It is highly offenſive to God, who hath made it our Duty to aſſiſt, ſupport, and comfort others, but reſerved Judgment to himſelf; who will judge us the more heavily, for aſſuming to our ſelves his Prerogative; not only becauſe it is an inſolence towards him, but a violation of that great Law of Charity, which is the *new Commandment*, the *fulfilling of the Law*, the *perfection of all Vertue.* The breach of this, which is of ſuch excellence,

and

and ſuch great uſe, muſt needs be a moſt hateful, moſt hurtful Offence, and be moſt grievouſly puniſhed.

Let us have this great Day of Judgment much in our Minds, and it will keep all our Paſſions in awe; particularly our Anger and Diſpleaſure, which are too frequently a biaſs upon our Judgments, and make them warp aſide from Truth and Charity; and pronounce ſuch Sentences upon others, as we cannot juſtifie our ſelves when we are in a calmer temper.

The conſtant thoughts of the day of Judgment, would always preſerve us in ſuch a temper, by keeping us humble, and maintaining an holy fear in us, of offending the Divine Majeſty, by doing any wrong to others.

II. And it would be a further ſecurity to us, if we would let our thoughts dwell more at home, and there ſcan our own Intentions and Actions, rather than thoſe of other Men. Here our proneneſs to judge and cenſure, may find ſufficient Employment, without medling with other Men: Nay, if we would throughly examine and condemn all that we find amiſs in our ſelves, we ſhould be diſpoſed to excuſe or make Apologies for them.

No other Men can be ſo well known to us, as we may be to our ſelves; eſpecially as to the Thoughts and Purpoſes, the Deſigns and Ends, which we propound to our ſelves in all our Actions: Particularly, in our Judgment which we paſs upon others, we ſhould do well to obſerve from whence ſuch forward, and many times ſevere Cenſures proceed, which we may be able to know a great deal more certainly, than we can the faults of thoſe whom we condemn.

And this Self-reflection is never more neceſſary, than

when we are about to paſs our Judgments upon others: If, at that time, we could caſt an eye upon our ſelves, and conſider, whether that very thing which we are going to condemn in them, we are not, or may not be guilty of our ſelves; whether if we were in their circumſtances, we might not, it is poſſible, do the ſame which we blame in them: It would lay a mighty reſtraint upon us, and put a ſtop to thoſe forward Motions we find in our hearts to cenſure others. For it's likely we ſhall find the ſame Inclinations, if not the ſame Diſtempers in our own Hearts and Lives: And perhaps in our own caſe, we call them by the name of Infirmities; and therefore why ſhould we give them a worſe Character in other Men?

To conclude this, it is evident this will preſerve us from judging others; both by diverting us another way, and by making us aſhamed to do that in another caſe, which we would not have done in our own.

While we look at other Mens faults, we are wont to neglect our own; and, in like manner, it is to be hoped we ſhall be detained from looking abroad, by obſerving how things go at home. For here we ſhall find enough to do; and, at laſt, find it a more comfortable Employment, as well as more eaſie; being both nearer at hand, and likely to do us as much good, as cenſuring others doth hurt.

And if we will needs be finding fault with others, we may know the better how to judge of them, by the obſervations we have made at home: Where, I believe, we ſhall find, that we do not love to pore (as we ſpeak) upon our own Faults or Imperfections; from which we are apt to turn away our Eyes, and not keep them long fixed

fixed on them. I am ſure we are loth others ſhould know them; and I fear we make Excuſes and Apologies for them; nay, if we can with any colour deny them, to be ſure, we will not eaſily nor haſtily believe any ill of our ſelves; and have very evident reaſon, before we conclude any thing againſt our ſelves: Which teaches us, how to treat other Men, in our Opinions and Cenſures of them; unleſs we will have one meaſure for our ſelves, and another for them; which is ſo unjuſt, that we cannot for ſhame, if we attend to what we do, be guilty of it. Eſpecially if in the third place,

III. With reſpect to our Brethren, we will always endeavour to poſſeſs our Hearts with an unfeigned Love and Charity towards them all. This is, as I ſaid, the great Vertue of Chriſtianity, the Spirit wherewith our Religion inſpires us, to love one another, *becauſe* God loved us; and *as* he loved us with ſuch a kind of love, which paſſes by and covers abundance of our failings: So ſhould we be inclined to do by others. And if we be, this Grace will preſerve us from all *raſh*, as well as *falſe* judgment of them; becauſe *love worketh no evil*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks: And this is none of the leaſt evils, to condemn our Brethren, when they are innocent; or before we be well informed about their fault; or with a deſign not to do good to them, or to others, but only to gratifie our own bad Affections.

Charity, is a proneneſs and readineſs of Mind, to do good to others; and therefore much more to ſpeak well of them; that is, all the good we can; and not to publiſh all the ill we know of them; unleſs, as

as I ſaid, to prevent others being infected or deceived by them.

Out of this bleſſed temper of Mind we muſt not ſuffer our ſelves to be beaten, by any ill behaviour of others towards us, or their ill treating of us; but ſtill retain a ſincere Love to their Perſons, whatſoever hatred we have to their Vices. Which will diſpoſe us to wink at many faults; to leſſen and abate our reſentment of others; to aggravate none; and to judge as favourably as we can of all. Except, as I ſaid, where the common Charity we owe to other Chriſtians obliges to do otherwiſe; for ſometimes it is a duty not only to reprove thoſe that are faulty, but to *rebuke them ſharply* (*Tit.* I. 13.) and with prudent Charity, to let both them and others alſo know our opinion concerning them or their actions; which may be a means to amend them, and prevent the like guilt for the future, both in them and in others.

Thus if we behave our ſelves, with a juſt fear of the judgment of God; with an impartial obſervance of our own actions; with an univerſal Charity to all our Brethren; we ſhall not eaſily break this precept of the Apoſtle, and thereby provoke and diſhonour God, reproach our ſelves, and injure our Neighbours.

Who will have juſt cauſe to complain of us, if we condemn them, for every little difference there is in their opinions from ours. Of this we ought to take a ſpecial care; becauſe we have ſeen the lamentable Effects of it among our ſelves; which ſhow us it is time to lay aſide all our uncharitable thoughts one of another; and to forbear the heavy cenſures we have been prone to paſs upon thoſe who differ from us.

We

We cannot indeed but judge ſome Doctrines and Practices to be very hainous; becauſe they are againſt the expreſs Word of God; as *Image-Worſhip*, for inſtance, we cannot but call *Idolatry*; becauſe God himſelf hath ſo judged it. This is to judge according to God's Law, and not againſt it, or beſide it: But to ſay it is *Idolatry* to pray by a Form, out of a Book; or that it *Superſtition* to wear a Surplice, or ſuch like things, is certainly a grievous crime; becauſe it is to condemn that, which God's Law no-where condemns: And on the other ſide, to pronounce all in general to be *Schiſmaticks*, who cannot conform to every thing, which we think reaſonable, is, at leaſt, *raſh judging*; For perhaps their ſcruples ariſe out of meer weakneſs of Underſtanding, prejudice of Education, or a pious fear of offending God, by doing that, in which they are not fully ſatisfied; or ſuch like Cauſes; which may excuſe them before God, of the guilt of Schiſm; even when they live in it.

Charitable Perſons will conſider the natural infirmity of all Mankind, which God conſiders much more; the prejudices under which they are bred; the difficulty of ſhaking them off; the perplexities wherewith ſome things are intangled, by deſigning Men; the great variety there is in our apprehenſions; the ſtrength of our Paſſions; the value every one of us ſets upon his own Opinion; our deſire to have others of it; with a multitude of ſuch like things: And upon theſe accounts bear one with another, in matters that hurt not the Faith of Chriſt, nor makes us careleſs in Chriſtian Practice.

Here

Here to paſs peremptory Sentences, is highly preſumptuous. For how come one ſort of Men by a right to Judge, Cenſure, and Condemn all the reſt? Why may not others take the ſame Authority over them? And then there will be nothing but Curſing and Damning, throughout the Chriſtian World: For this kind of judging, you know, is come to ſuch a height among ſome Men, that they pronounce *Anathema's* and paſs a Sentence of Damnation, upon all thoſe, who in any thing believe otherwiſe than they do.

This is ſo contrary to the tender Mercies of our Saviour; ſo deſtructive of the Communion of Saints; ſo injurious to the Grace of Charity, which hopes the beſt; ſo croſs to the precept of Chriſt, *judge not, that you be not judged*; ſuch an Enemy to the publick Peace, which is eaſily broken with thoſe who are looked upon as no better than damned Wretches; ſuch a forgetfulneſs of Humane weakneſs; ſo proud an uſurpation of the Divine Prerogative, and arrogant tyranny over anothers Servants; and, to ſay no more, ſo much againſt the very Law of Nature (which hath made the Underſtanding free, and not to be forced to ſubmit to what it knows to be falſe) that of all things in the World, it is moſt unlike the Chriſtian Spirit; and will be ſo judged at the day of Chriſt.

But notwithſtanding all our Reaſons and Advices, there will be too much cenſuring and judging of all ſorts; while the World continues as it is: Let us therefore ſee how we ought to behave our ſelves, when we are unjuſtly cenſured by others.

II.

And here I shall give as many *Directions*, as I gave *Advices*.

I. First, We must watch our selves that we be not provoked by Mens unjust or unkind Censures, to return the like Censures upon them. To this we are very prone; for the most ingenuous Minds have the greatest value for their Reputation, and deeply resent the Wounds that are given to their good Name. If any thing will make them think their Tongues are their own, and incense them to sharpen them like a Sword, and be severe in their recrimination; this is the Provocation. This whets Mens Invention to find out faults, as well as to aggravate them; and gives a sting to the Words wherein they represent them: Which presently turns Censures into Reproaches, and heightens Reproaches into downright railing. St. *Peter's* Rule therefore in this case, must be observed in the very beginning of it, *Not rendring evil for evil*, (censure for censure) *nor railing for railing*, 1 *Pet.* Chap. III. Verse 9. Which was exemplified in our blessed Saviour, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again*, Chap. II. 23.

He that returns Censure for Censure, blows the fire already kindled, and inflames the passion into higher animosities: But he who wisely forbears to recriminate, in effect extinguishes it. By governing his Tongue and his Passion, he both evidently proves himself a better Man than his Censurer, and also discredits all he says: Nay, repels the reproach he cast upon him, so that it returns upon himself.

This is the very method the Apostle St. *Peter* prescribes to baffle Reproaches; not to return them, but to continue in well-doing: *For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish Men*, 1 Pet. ii. 15. And again, *v.* 16. of the next Chapter, *Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak evil of you as evil doers, they may be ashamed, who falsly accuse your good conversation in Christ.*

II. *Secondly*, The Censures that are cast upon us, though unrighteous, should make us watchful over our selves, lest we give any real occasion for them. There is excellent use to be made even of the Judgment which an Enemy passes upon us; insomuch, that they who censure or reproach us out of hatred, may thereby do us a kindness, against their Intentions. *Every way of man is right in his own eyes*, saith *Solomon*, Prov. XXI. 2. We are all apt to flatter our selves, and our Friends are apt to be partial also, for both to tell us of our Faults; either because they are afraid to offend us, or they are guilty of the same themselves. By which means it often comes to pass, that we have the first notice of our failings, not from them that love us, but from them that hate us: Which, though meant ill by them, may prove very serviceable to us. For *open rebuke is better than secret love*, Prov. XXVII. 5. We may profit more by the bold Censure of our Enemies, than by the caution and reservedness of our Friends. For whosoever is faithful to himself, will so far mind the Judgment of his Adversaries, as thence to take occasion to reflect upon himself; to examine his Heart and his Ways, and calling himself to a strict account, labour to amend what he finds amiss.

Have I not given ſome ground to this Cenſure? Is not the Reproach too true? Or if he that paſſes it be miſtaken in this particular, Might he not have found ſomething elſe to cenſure, wherein I am truly guilty? Have I not been faulty in this very kind, of cenſuring others; if not falſly, yet rathly? Such Queſtions as theſe, we ſhould do well to ask our ſelves, on ſuch occaſions; which naturally awaken us to ſelf-reflection, and bid us ſtand upon our guard, leſt by our negligence and remiſneſs, we not only incurr the juſt cenſure of Men, but even the Judgment of God Himſelf.

Which leads me to the *laſt* Direction in this caſe, when we fall under unchriſtian Cenſures.

III. Which is, to uſe ſpecial care to preſerve our Souls in peace with God. This is the remedy St. *Peter* preſcribes, in a place much like to the fore-named, 1 *Pet.* ii. 12. *Having your converſation honeſt among the Gentiles: that whereas they ſpeak againſt you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they ſhall behold, glorifie God in the day of viſitation.*

It is impoſſible for the beſt of Men, in the midſt of ſo many follies and enmities, as reign amongſt us in this World, wholly to eſcape all cenſure. *John* the Baptiſt was ſaid to *have a devil*; Chriſt himſelf was deemed *a glutton, a wine-bibber*, and *a friend of publicans and ſinners*; the Apoſtles were *made as the filth of the world, and the off-ſcouring of all things*, as St. *Paul* tells us, *v.* 13. below my Text. Now if, ſuch Men as theſe could not eſcape the Cenſures, nor avoid the Reproaches of a wicked and miſtaken World; By what reaſon do any one of us expect to be free from either?

And if it be folly in us to expect to eſcape them, What muſt we make our ſupport and comfort under them, but the very ſame that they reſted in, as their ſatisfaction? Peace with God, and our Minds; a ſpotleſs Conſcience towards God and towards Men. This we ought to ſtudy, to the utmoſt of our power; and in this reſt contented, or rather take full ſatisfaction. For this was the ſupport in which the Apoſtles found ſuch conſolation, that St. *Paul* ſays, (2 *Cor.* I. 12.) *This is our rejoicing, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world.* The very ſame will alſo ſupport and comfort us, in every thing that befals us.

If all be clear and bright within, nothing without can cloud and darken us. If we put on that Armour of God, *the Breſt-plate of Righteouſneſs*; it will ſecure us from all the Arrows that are ſhot againſt us. If they ſcratch the skin, or perhaps leave a ſcarr without, they ſhall make no wound within; their poiſon ſhall not reach the heart. Nay, they ſhall not ſet a laſting mark upon our Name; but recoil, and fly back at laſt, in the faces of them that ſhot them.

Peace with God, is peace with the Soveraign of the World. Peace with him who is our Judge, the only Judge and Law-giver, that is able *to ſave and to deſtroy.* And what is it to be judged and condemned of Men, whilſt we are abſolved by the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth? Who will call our very Judges to an account, and reverſe their unrighteous Sentences which they have paſſed; to their

eternal Shame and Confuſion: And to the eternal Honour of thoſe, who have been abuſed by them.

Who, in the mean time, ought to ſuffer patiently; and have inward peace and quiet, comfort and ſatisfaction in their Minds, in the midſt of the clamour, the noiſe, the tumult, the duſt, and the clouds, which the folly and paſſion of Men, may raiſe about them: If their Conſciences, all the time of this buſtle, do acquit them, and give them the Teſtimony, which St. *Paul* gave of himſelf, *Acts* XXIV. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of offence, towards God and towards Men.*

Let this be our conſtant *exerciſe*, and it will reward the pains we take in it, with *eaſe and reſt:* For a *Conſcience void of offence*, will not be ſo much as diſguſted at that, which galls and ſorely grieves thoſe who are conſcious of guilt. *Great peace*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *have they that love thy Law; and nothing ſhall offend them.* For beſides the Feaſt which a good Conſcience continually makes them, they have the Joys of hope, that God will one day, not only clear them from all baſe Imputations, but crown their Innocence with eternal Glory.

Which hope, as it ought to inſpire us unto all worthy Undertakings; ſo it ought to bear us up with Courage and Reſolution in the purſuit of them; though they meet with ill Interpretations, unkind Cenſures, and vile Requitals. That joyful Day of the Lord

Lord will make an amends for all that we may suffer, by the uncharitableness or ill will of some; and by the folly or ignorant Zeal of others: When he, that knows the Heart, will say, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Amen.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Pag. 2. l. 5.		*read* deter.
7.	9.	*r.* for when.
13.	9.	*r.* who they.
16.	29.	*r.* detractions.
28.	13.	*r.* unmindful.
43.	4.	*r.* Life.

Books lately printed for *Richard Chiſwell*.

Scriptorum Eccleſiaſticorum Hiſtoria Literaria a Chriſto nato uſque ad Seculum XIV. *Facili Methodo digeſta. Qua de Vita illorum ac Rebus geſtis, de Secta, Dogmatibus, Elogio, Stylo; de Scriptis genuinis, dubiis, ſuppoſititiis, ineditis, deperditis, Fragmentis; deque variis Operum Editionibus perſpicue agitur. Accedunt Scriptores Gentiles, Chriſtianæ Religionis Oppugnatores; & cujuſvis Sæculi Breviarium. Inſeruntur ſuis locis Veterum aliquot Opuſcula & Fragmenta, tum Græca, tum Latina hactenus inedita. Præmiſſa denique Prolegomena, quibus plurima ad Antiquitatis Eccleſiaſtica ſtudium ſpectantia traduntur.* Opus Indicibus neceſſariis inſtructum. Autore GULIELMO CAVE, SS. Theol. Profeſ. Canonico Windeſorienſi. *Accedit ab Alia Manu Appendix ab ineunte Seculo* XIV. *ad Annum uſque* MDXVII. *Fol.* 1689.

Dr. BURNET [now Biſhop of *Salisbury*] his Life of Dr. *William Bedell* Biſhop of *Kilmore* in *Ireland*; to which are annexed the Letters betwixt Him and *Wadſworth*, about Religion.

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—— Enquiry into the preſent State of Affairs, and in particular, Whether we owe Allegiance to the King in theſe Circumſtances? and, whether we are bound to Treat with Him, and call Him back, or no?

—— Sermon preached before the Prince of *Orange*, 23d. Decemb. 1688.

—— Thankſgiving Sermon before the Houſe of Commons, 31. *Jan.* 1688.

—— Eighteen Papers relating to the Affairs of Church and State, during the Reign of King *James* II. Seventeen whereof were written in *Holland*, and firſt printed there; the other at *Exeter*, ſoon after the Prince of *Orange's* Landing in *England*.

—— Letter to Mr. *Thevenot*; containing a Cenſure of Mr. *Le Grand's* Hiſtory of King *Henry* the Eighth's Divorce. To which is added, A Cenſure of Mr. *De Meaux's* Hiſtory of the Variations of the Proteſtant Churches. Together with ſome further Reflections on Mr. *Le Grand*. 1689.

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Dr.

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